

# Florida State University Football Media Conference

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Tallahassee, Florida, USA

## Head Coach Mike Norvell

### Press Conference



Florida State 58, Northern Alabama 13

**MIKE NORVELL:** First off, proud of our guys and just the way that they responded tonight. I'll say again, the game didn't start off how we wanted.

You know, faced adversity on the field early, had a punt fake that hit us. They did a good job of running a variety of different plays and formations and were able to get out to an early lead. You know, offensively obviously didn't start how we wanted, missed some opportunities.

When Jordan went down, that was something that nobody ever wants to see a player go down. I don't have any updates on it tonight, so just so everybody is aware, but I was proud of the way our guys responded throughout the course of the game.

As you sit there and watch a football team come together, I thought our guys did that at a very high level. We knew all three phases we had to continue to rise up. I thought our defense was great basically throughout the rest of the game.

Offensively we were able to get into a little bit of a rhythm, hit some big plays, had a couple of big runs. A variety of guys offensively were asked to contribute. We had some other guys that had some bumps and bruises. We had really in all phases some guys that went down. So really had to and got to play a lot of guys that got some significant action.

Wasn't the cleanest game. Like I said, we had too many drops, too many missed opportunities. I thought Tate did a great job coming in, other than a few mistakes here and there. Was really, really good tonight.

What he did where he located the ball, he made a couple of great decisions just in progressions and read. He showed all the work he has been putting in. He was ready for his moment when his number was called.

As we come out of tonight, you sit there, and you finish up

the regular season undefeated here at Doak Campbell Stadium, and that's something that we're so very proud of.

For the five straight sell-outs to send the season, our crowd was remarkable. Just great atmosphere. To be able to honor the seniors, to be able to honor the guys that played their last game in our stadium, it was special.

I thought defense being able to create some take-aways. Jarrian Jones I thought was remarkable. Had a couple of huge plays, with the sack fumble, and then obviously the interception there later in the game. He's been so good for us this year, and he's continuing to grow, continuing to push. It was definitely a great performance on his part.

He broke the rock there for us after the game, but I thought it was a great showcase of the heart and the character that our guys have because sometimes those games, they bring more anxiety. If you find yourself in a situation that's tough -- I was just talking to the team about this.

Nobody pictures being down in that game early, but it was the circumstance we found ourselves in. There's a lot of reasons why, a lot of things that we can correct, but in the moment it's all about what you could with the next play. It's all about what your belief is. It's all about are you going to be willing to block out the anxiety and the pressure that you feel and just go play one?

We've been through a lot. We've been through a lot of adversity. We've been through a lot of challenges as a team and as a program, but I am very proud of our guys for just the way that they do all things that they do. We're going to continue to push and going to continue to get better. We have a huge game this next week.

Obviously having to go on the road with an opportunity to try to finish the regular season undefeated. Our guys have put us in this position, so everything we have is going to go into our preparation to being our best come next Saturday.

**Q. In the moments after Jordan's injury a lot of guys obviously were struggling and needed to be consoled. What kind of messages were you and the other coaches giving them, and how did you guys kind of**



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## snap them out of that?

MIKE NORVELL: It's hard any time you see any player go down, but obviously Jordan is so important to this team. Not just as the quarterback, but just who he is and what he stands for.

When you see a player get hurt and not really knowing what that's going to be, but obviously it was something that it was emotional, and it was emotional for everybody.

So just trying to help them work to being prepared for what was needed in the moment because one of your brothers go down, well, there's another one that's there that has to step up and has to stand up, and you've got to be there to support them and encourage them.

I'm not just talking about a quarterback, but all of us because anybody that -- when you care about a teammate, when you care about a team and just the way that this program is built, man, a lot goes into it. But ultimately I thought our guys were able to kind of gather themselves and just continue to play. I thought a lot of guys played at a very high level and were there in support of what was needed.

### **Q. Following up on that, Mike, what does it say about this team's maturity to be able to be resilient and to keep playing hard throughout the night given the circumstances of Jordan's injury?**

MIKE NORVELL: I mean, that's who they are. They've been through it. What I love is even the older guys, how they are mentoring, how they're encouraging, how they're pushing the younger guys to work to hits the standard of how we want to operate.

I mean, when you have that type of leadership, when you have guys that have seen it all, and we've got a bunk of guys and a bunch of seniors that have been through it all, it's so encouraging to see the investment that they're willing to make on others, but it also speaks to the character and the heart that they have as a football team.

So it's a challenge. We push our guys every single day. You can see in their response just how confident they are even in those uncomfortable situations.

### **Q. You talked about the team's response and the players' response, their emotions. What are your emotions? You have such a long history with that kid, and he's done so much for your offense and your program in general. What were your emotions now, and what were they at the moment, and how did you block it out?**

MIKE NORVELL: I hate to say you block it out. You don't. Coming in we knew this was Jordan Travis's last game at Doak Campbell Stadium. I wanted to see him have a special game, special experience.

Any time somebody gets hurt, it hurt. It's painful to see. It's painful to have to go through. You just want so bad for that kid because he does everything right. He really is just a special, special young man.

I can't say that I did block it out. You go and you coach and you do everything, just like I said earlier, for the players that are out there on the field. I went to them too, but it doesn't lessen anything of the impact of when you have any players that goes down.

I mean, it's hard because this is a game that these guys, they put so much into. Like I always tell you, you've got to be for others what they need, and really our players, the way that they competed, the way that they fought, the way that they were responding was a lot of what I even needed at times because you see their desire to go out there and to do all they can to make sure that we finished as good as we could be. They showed it in their response, and we have the responsibility as coaches to do the same.

### **Q. You probably didn't see it. Jordan before the end of the game, he posted on Instagram a shouting out Brock for his first career touchdown. I guess what's it say about him that the night he had that that's where his head is at, and he wants to be showing that love with what he's been through?**

MIKE NORVELL: That's who he is. A lot of people talk about caring. He lives it. He lives it every day. His investment in this team, his investment in his teammates, this program in general, I mean, he's special.

It's obviously not the way that he wanted to go out of this game, but it doesn't shock me. I didn't know that he put anything out, but that doesn't shock me.

### **Q. After such an emotional game tonight when you guys have Florida on the horizon, what do you expect from them this practice? What kind of intensity do you want to see?**

MIKE NORVELL: They're going to respond. We're going to prepare to be better than what we've been. I believe in this team. I believe in what they're made of. I know how they're trained, and I know what they're asked to do.

We have a game next Saturday night on the road, and we're going to have everything that we can do to prepare



ourselves to be the best that we can possibly be. I've got a lot of confidence in this team because I live with them. I see them every day, and I see the way that they pour into each other.

They're going to have each other's back, and we're going to go attack this week. We're going to have the best week of preparation that we've had and put ourselves to go put our stamp on how we want to end the regular season.

**Q. You mentioned some players stepped up. Who kind of gave a good pep talk or got the team rallied around to keep going and playing after the injury?**

MIKE NORVELL: It's not necessarily about a pep talk. There's plenty of people that can stand up. It's about your actions. It's about how you go out there and what you do, how you perform, the encouragement of others.

I've talked about it all throughout the course of the season. Whether it's defensive guys come in and just encouraging offensive guys, it doesn't -- you don't have to stop and go to one person. When you get your opportunity, when you can make a positive impact, go give all that you have. That is the encouragement.

I think our coaches, players, everybody fed off that tonight. Our guys did what was necessary in being able to respond and finish the game the way that they did.

**Q. I'm sure Tate was expecting to play in this game, but not like that, not so suddenly and not with the mood of the stadium like that. How do you think he responded? That's such a tough moment for a kid to go into. How do you think he responded immediately and then over the course of the game as he got more and more confident?**

MIKE NORVELL: I thought he was great. There was a few mistakes, a few things that you could tell everything was rolling for him, but he has been preparing all season.

You talk about it. A few weeks ago in my office we had a one-on-one just talking about being prepared in case the moment ever calls for you. Tate does a great job in his preparation. He's a wonderful teammate.

Our guys have a lot of confidence in Tate because they watch him practice every day. They know the talent. They know the ability.

I think that was something that was really impressive to me because he never seemed rattled in the moment. He knew he was prepared and ready, and that's what you have to do at every position, but obviously, the quarterback position

gets magnified to the elite level.

I thought he did a wonderful job. He went out there, and I thought played really well.

**Q. For Tate do you think the key is to keep doing what he's been doing, keep being who he has been or for him to kind of understand that this thing is so close to the finish line, and the opportunity he has to help this team pass it?**

MIKE NORVELL: He just needs to be him. Just because you're not a starter, which Tate obviously has been one of the best quarterbacks in the country, but that doesn't mean that he hasn't been pushing and leading and doing everything that he could to show his teammates that if his number was called, that he was going to be ready.

We've got to do a better job at helping him out. I think we had too many dropped balls. He threw a couple of unbelievable passes. We need to support him the best way that we can, but he needs to just go be himself. If he does that, I have a lot of confidence in how he'll play and obviously how guys around him will be there for him in those moments.

**Q. Obviously an emotional day. Can you talk about the emotions pregame with the senior day ceremony, what that meant to you, and what that meant for your players?**

MIKE NORVELL: Just a great group of seniors. These guys, they poured so much into the program all for different amounts of time. Guys like Kalen DeLoach, and obviously he didn't play today. He was unavailable.

Just when we were celebrating them in pregame, just thinking through the journey, thinking through all the things that these guys have worked through and just to see the confidence that they have, to see how they represent this program.

Obviously we talked about Jarrian. Jordan, he was awesome there before the game. You just get a sense of these wonderful young men that have really invested and put all that they could into being a Florida State Seminole. They will forever be.

This is a team that -- I told them in the locker room. This team is going to be remembered. We get an opportunity to go take another step here this next week, but this is a special group, and it's led by that senior class.

It was a great night and great experience to be able to see them get celebrated and hearing our fan base, the

applause that they had and obviously just what these guys mean to our wonderful fan base.

**Q. Quindarius Jones had that blocked punt at the end -- or returned it for a touchdown. He got his opportunity, like you mentioned, and he took advantage of it at the end of the game and didn't quit. What did that say about him and the team?**

MIKE NORVELL: It was great. Obviously they lined up for a field goal there late, and I thought we got great push by our defensive front. KJ Sampson, Liam, those guys did a wonderful job pushing everything back.

We were able to get the block. When I saw the ball bouncing, I saw Quindarius. He was a high school receiver. He's a guy that's really athletic and has a great future in front of him.

When I saw him scoop it, I knew he probably wasn't going to let the kicker tackle him. It was impressive to see him finish it off the way that he did.

What I love, too, it's the last play of the game. Finished the game. You see the team's reaction. I don't know if there was a player that wasn't in the end zone celebrating with him, and those are the things --

It doesn't matter how long you've been here. Q has been here since January. You see the love. You saw the appreciation. You saw how much those guys care. Those are wonderful moments to be a part of.

**Q. A multi-layered. You mentioned is Jarrian Jones, the play he had, and Braden Fiske had some plays. It seemed like the defense -- when the offense needed a little bit help, the defense really stepped up. Then the other part was, did you see the reaction from the 2013 team when L.T. scored?**

MIKE NORVELL: Oh, yeah. That was pretty special. I thought the defense -- like I said, barring the first couple of series where we got hit on a few things, they were flat dominant in all ways.

The defensive front was great. I thought guys flew around. It was definitely what we needed. As we kind of collected ourselves offensively and continued to go to work through some of the early challenges, I thought the defense was awesome and created a short field.

Obviously we were able to score some points. The second quarter was really good for us. Those guys were consistent throughout.

On L.T.'s touchdown, seeing the 2013 team, I mean, what a special group. They were here with us last night. Majority of them. Some of them came in today, but majority of them were here last night just for our team walk.

Seeing the gratitude for the place but also understanding how much that they're appreciated for who they were, for who they are now as guys that are in their professional careers. That's a team that will be celebrated forever.

Seeing them in that end zone, just the energy in the stadium and being able to have that moment, I thought that was one of the cooler experiences of the game.

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